

CHAPTER 2. SPECIFIC TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

SECTION 9. CREW AND DISPATCHER RECORDS INSPECTIONS (PTRS CODE 1627)

275. GENERAL. This section provides direction and guidance to operations inspectors for the inspection of crew and dispatcher qualification, training, and currency records of Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 121 or FAR Part 135 operators. The objective of a crew and dispatcher records inspection is to determine whether or not the operator's records provide documentation that the operator has complied with regulatory training and qualification requirements. The inspection shall establish whether or not the operator is keeping the required records and whether or not the required training and qualification events are being conducted. Before conducting a records inspection, inspectors must be thoroughly familiar with volume 3, chapter 11, of this handbook; FAR § 121.401(c) and FAR § 121.683 or FAR § 135.63 as applicable; and this section.

277. PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING A RECORDS INSPECTION. This paragraph contains a general description of the procedures inspectors will use when conducting records inspections. Inspectors may modify these guidelines to meet local conditions.

A. Location. Inspectors normally conduct a records inspection at the place where the operator maintains the records. The inspection process does not require that the operator surrender records, even temporarily, and records may not be removed from the operator's premises without the operator's permission. Should an agreement be reached for inspectors to remove records, the operator must be given an itemized receipt for all records.

B. Preparation and Initial Briefing. Normally, advance notice, to the operator, of a planned records inspection is appropriate.

(1) An introduction and initial briefing should be given to the operator. The briefing should describe the purpose of the inspection, what records will be required, and that a debriefing will take place at the conclusion of the inspection.

(2) Prior to conducting any records inspections, inspectors must become familiar with the operator's system of recordkeeping and become familiar with

which specific records are available at the facility. This familiarization is particularly important when the operator is using a computer-based recordkeeping system as detailed in volume 3, chapter 11, section 4, of this handbook.

(3) Prior to their arrival, inspectors should prepare a list of records to be inspected since a records inspection uses the operator's work space and usually takes time away from an employee's assigned duties. Pre-planning and preparation for a records inspection reflect positively on the professionalism of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and should result in as little disruption to the operator's work routine as possible.

NOTE: Information from previous records inspections that are contained in the Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS) should be accessed to aid the inspector in determining the strategy and scope of the inspection.

C. Records Selection. Before conducting a records inspection, inspectors must determine the number of records to be examined, which categories of the records that will be inspected, and to what depth records will be scrutinized.

(1) Chapter 1, section 1, of this volume provides general guidance to inspectors for determining the actual number of records to examine.

(2) Inspectors may obtain information on crew-member and dispatcher population from the Vital Information Subsystem (VIS).

D. Records Handling. Care should be taken to keep records as intact as the operator presents them. The preferred procedure is for inspectors to take only a few records at a time, examine them, then return that batch to the operator before starting on another batch. If it is necessary or desirable to obtain a copy of a record, the operator may not be willing or able to provide it. In this case, inspectors must make arrangements for copies.

E. Errors or Omissions in Records. A records inspection is not an investigation, yet inspectors may find errors or omissions in an operator's records.

Minor errors and omissions may not constitute a lack of compliance on the part of the operator and may not require the inspector to initiate enforcement action. Some errors or omissions, though, may require further action. For example, a crewmember training record may be found that does not indicate that required recurrent training was accomplished.

(1) Further investigation may produce evidence that the training actually was completed. This omission may easily be corrected on the spot by the operator and may preclude the need for the inspector to initiate enforcement action. In this case, the inspector should record in the PTRS that the problem occurred, was brought to the operator's attention, and was corrected on the spot by the operator. The inspector should discuss, with the operator, methods for preventing a repetition of the problem and should record, in the PTRS, the operator's intended fix.

(2) If the operator cannot produce evidence that the training was conducted, the inspector shall record the facts so that an investigation according to FAA Order 2150.3, "Compliance and Enforcement," can later be opened. The inspector who discovers the discrepancy is responsible for recording the finding in the PTRS and initiating an investigation.

279. CATEGORIES OF RECORDS. This paragraph lists the airman and dispatcher records required by FAR 135.63 and 121.683. Some or all of the categories are required for pilots, flight engineers, flight navigators, flight attendants, flight and ground instructors, designated examiners, check airmen and aircraft dispatchers. Volume 3, chapter 11, section 3, of this handbook gives guidance as to the retention period for each of these categories of records.

A. Airman Training and Qualification Records. The operator's recordkeeping procedures should be reviewed to ensure that the training and qualification required for the individual's present duty assignment is documented. Individual records should be reviewed according to the sampling plan to verify that the operator is correctly managing the training and qualification program.

(1) The training and qualification requirements of FAR Part 121 and FAR Part 135 can be complex (see volume 3, chapter 2, section 7, of this handbook).

(2) FAR § 121.401(c) and FAR § 135.323(c) require that the documentation of ground, flight, or qualification segments contain a certification by the instructor, supervisor, or check airman that the crewmember or dispatcher is knowledgeable and proficient. In an electronic recordkeeping system, the certification does not have to be made by means of a signature.

B. Medical Qualification Records. Inspectors should observe that any required medical certificates are current and appropriate to the applicable airman certificate.

C. Route, Special Airport, Area Qualification Records. Inspectors must ensure that operators have documented that the pilot-in-command (PIC) has met the special currency requirements of FAR § 121.443, FAR § 121.445 or FAR § 135.229. Inspectors must also ensure that operators with the authority to conduct flights requiring Class II navigation or to operate in special-use airspace (such as minimum navigation performance specification (MNPS), North Pacific (NOPAC), or Central East Pacific (CEPAC)) document the successful completion of required training and qualification for each flight crewmember.

D. Operating Experience or Operating Familiarization Records. Documentation should verify that operating experience or operating familiarization has been accomplished.

(1) All FAR Part 121 crewmembers and FAR Part 135 PIC's in commuter operations must have completed the required operating experience prior to being assigned unsupervised duty in revenue service.

(2) FAR Part 121 PIC's who have completed initial upgrade training for an operator that uses approved simulator training under FAR § 121.409(c) must have been observed by an FAA inspector during operating experience.

(3) Aircraft dispatchers must have completed operating familiarization.

E. Recency-of-Experience Records. This category refers to events, other than required checks, that operators must accomplish within a specified time period to remain qualified to serve in revenue operations.

(1) Pilots must complete 3 takeoffs and landings each 90 days. FAR § 121.439 requires that the landings be made in type. FAR § 135.247 requires that the landings be made in category and class and, if a type rating is required, in type. FAR § 135.247 also requires that a pilot complete 3 night landings within the previous 90 days to be eligible to serve at night. Training in night landings is required by Appendix E of FAR Part 121.

(2) Flight engineers must have acquired 50 hours or a proficiency check within the past 6 months.

F. Check Airman, Aircrew Program Designee (APD), and Designated Examiner Records. Operator records should verify that check airmen have completed appropriate training, have maintained currency

in the crew position they are evaluating, and that letters of authorization or designation have been maintained. The inspector should observe that operators record the number of qualification functions being performed by check airmen.

G. Special Training and Testing Requirements. The inspector should observe that operators that conduct such operations as air ambulance operations keep records of specialized training.

H. Employment History. Inspectors should ensure that the operator's flight crewmember records document action taken concerning an individual's release from employment for physical or professional disqualification as required by FAR § 121.683(a)(2) or FAR § 135.63(a)(4)(ix).

281. PTRS INPUT. The inspector must record any inspection of airman records or any category of the records in the PTRS by using activity code 1627.

282.-292. RESERVED.

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